



مجلة العلوم الإنسانية  
بجامعة حائل



جامعة حائل  
UNIVERSITY OF HAIL

# مجلة العلوم الإنسانية

دورية علمية محكمة تصدر عن جامعة حائل



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## مجلة العلوم الإنسانية

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للتواصل:

مركز النشر العلمي والترجمة

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## لبذة عن المجلة

### تعريف بالمجلة

مجلة العلوم الإنسانية، مجلة دورية علمية محكمة، تصدر عن وكالة الجامعة للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي بجامعة حائل كل ثلاثة أشهر بصفة دورية، حيث تصدر أرية أعداد في كل سنة، وبحسب اكتمال البحوث المحاضرة للناشر. وقد نجحت مجلة العلوم الإنسانية في تحقيق معايير اعتماد معامل التأثير والاستشادات المرعبة للمجلات العلمية العربية معامل " أرسيف " Arcif \* لتوافقة مع المعايير العالمية، والتي يبلغ عددها (32) معياراً، وقد أطلق ذلك خلال التقرير السنوي الثامن للمجلات للعام 2023.

### رؤية المجلة

التميز في النشر العلمي في العلوم الإنسانية وفقاً لمعايير مهنية عالية.

### رسالة المجلة

نشر البحوث العلمية في التخصصات الإنسانية، خدمة البحث العلمي والمجتمع المحلي والدولي.

### أهداف المجلة

تهدف المجلة إلى إيجاد منافذ رصينة لنشر المعرفة العلمية المتخصصة في المجال الإنساني، وتمكين الباحثين -من مختلف بلدان العالم- من نشر أبحاثهم ودراساتهم وإنتاجهم الفكري لمعالجة واقع المشكلات الحياتية، وتأسيس الأطر النظرية والتطبيقية للمعارف الإنسانية في المجالات لتبوعه، ووفق ضوابط وشروط ومواصفات علمية دقيقة، تحقيقاً للحدوة والريادة في نشر البحث العلمي.

## قواعد النشر

### لغة النشر

- 1- تقبل المجلة البحوث المكتوبة باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية.
- 2- يُكتب عنوان البحث وملخصه باللغة العربية للبحوث المكتوبة باللغة الإنجليزية.
- 3- يُكتب عنوان البحث وملخصه ومراجعته باللغة الإنجليزية للبحوث المكتوبة باللغة العربية، على أن تكون ترجمة الملخص إلى اللغة الإنجليزية صحيحة ومنحصصة.

### مجالات النشر في المجلة

تتم مجلة العلوم الإنسانية بجامعة حائل بنشر إسهامات الباحثين في مختلف القضايا الإنسانية الاجتماعية والأدبية، إضافة إلى نشر الدراسات والمقالات التي تتوفر فيها الأصول والمعايير العلمية المتعارف عليها دولياً، وتقبل الأبحاث المكتوبة باللغة العربية والإنجليزية في مجال اختصاصها، حيث تعين المجلة بالتخصصات الآتية:

- علم النفس وعلم الاجتماع والخدمة الاجتماعية والفلسفة الفكرية العلمية الدقيقة.
- المناهج وطرق التدريس والعلوم التربوية المختلفة.
- الدراسات الإسلامية والشريعة والقانون.
- الآداب: التاريخ والجغرافيا والفنون واللغة العربية، واللغة الإنجليزية، والسياحة والآثار.
- الإدارة والإعلام والاتصال وعلوم الرياضة والحركة.

## أوعية نشر المجلة

تصدر المجلة ورقياً حسب القواعد والأنظمة المعمول بها في المجلات العلمية المحكمة، كما تُنشر البحوث المقبولة بعد تمكينها إلكترونياً لتمام المعرفة العلمية بشكل أوسع في جميع المؤسسات العلمية داخل المملكة العربية السعودية وخارجها.

## ضوابط النشر في مجلة العلوم الإنسانية وإجراءاته

### أولاً: شروط النشر

#### أولاً: شروط النشر

1. أن يتسم بالأصالة والجدّة والابتكار والإضافة المعرفية في التخصص.
2. لم يسبق للباحث نشر بحثه.
3. ألا يكون مستقلاً من رسالة علمية (ماجستير / دكتوراة) أو بحوث سبق نشرها للباحث.
4. أن يلتزم الباحث بالأمانة العلمية.
5. أن تراعى فيه منهجية البحث العلمي وقواعده.
6. عدم مخالفة البحث للضوابط والأحكام والآداب العامة في المملكة العربية السعودية.
7. مراعاة الأمانة العلمية وضوابط التوثيق في النقل والاقتباس.
8. السلامة اللغوية ووضوح الصور والرسومات والجداول إن وجدت، وللمجلة حقها في مراجعة التحرير والتدقيق النحوي.

### ثانياً: قواعد النشر

1. أن يشمل البحث على: صفحة عنوان البحث، ومستخلص باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية، ومقدمة، واصلب البحث، وخاتمة تتضمن النتائج والتوصيات، وثبت للمصادر والمراجع باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية، والملاحق اللازمة (إن وجدت).
2. فسي حال (نشر البحث) يزود الباحث بنسخة إلكترونية من عدد للمجلة الذي تم نشر بحثه فيه، ومستقلاً لبحثه.
3. فسي حال اعتماد نشر البحث تؤول حقوق نشره كافة للمجلة، ولها أن تعيد نشره ورقياً أو إلكترونياً، وبمقّ لها إدراجه في قواعد البيانات المحليّة والعالميّة - بمقابل أو بدون مقابل - وذلك دون حاجة لإذن الباحث.
4. لا يمقّ للباحث إعادة نشر بحثه المقبول للنشر في المجلة إلا بعد إذن كتابي من رئيس هيئة تحرير المجلة.
5. الآراء الواردة فسي البحوث المنشورة تعبر عن وجهة نظر الباحثين، ولا تعبر عن رأي مجلة العلوم الإنسانية.
6. النشر في المجلة يتطلب رسوماً مالية قدرها ( 1000 ريال) يتم إيداعها في حساب المجلة، وذلك بعد إشعار الباحث بالمقبول الأولي وهي غير مستردة سواء أحيث البحث للنشر أم تم رفضه من قبل المحكمين.

### ثالثاً: توثيق البحث

أسلوب التوثيق المعتمد فسي المجلة هو نظام جمعية علم النفس الأمريكية (APA7)



## رابعاً: خطوات وإجراءات التقديم

1. يقدم الباحث الرئيس طلباً للنشر (من خلال منصة الباحثين بعد التسجيل فيها) يتعهد فيه بأن بحثه يتفق مع شروط المحلة، وذلك على النحو الآتي:
  - أ. البحث الذي تقدمت به لم يسبق نشرة (ورقياً أو إلكترونياً)، وأنه غير مقدم للنشر، ولن يقدم للنشر في وجهة أخرى حتى تنتهي إجراءات تحكيمه، ونشرة في المحلة، أو الاعتذار للباحث لعدم قبول البحث.
  - ب. البحث الذي تقدمت به ليس مستلماً من بحوث أو كتب سبق نشرها أو قدمت للنشر، وليس مستلماً من الرسائل العلمية للماستر أو الدكتوراة.
  - ج. الالتزام بالأمانة العلمية وأخلاقيات البحث العلمي.
  - د. مراعاة منهج البحث العلمي وقواعده.
- هـ. الالتزام بالضوابط الفنية ومعايير كتابة البحث في مجلة العلوم الإنسانية بجامعة حائل كما هو في دليل المؤلفين لكتابة البحوث المقدمة للنشر في مجلة العلوم الإنسانية بجامعة حائل وفق نظام APA7
2. إرفاق صورة ذاتية مختصرة في صفحة واحدة حسب النموذج لتعمد للمحلة (نموذج الصورة الذاتية).
3. إرفاق نموذج المراجعة والتدقيق الأولي بعد تعهده من قبل الباحث.
4. يرسل الباحث أربع نسخ من بحثه إلى المحلة إلكترونياً بصيغة (word) نسختين و (PDF) نسختين تكون إحداها بالصيغتين الحالية مما يدل على شخصية الباحث.
5. يتم التقديم إلكترونياً من خلال منصة تقديم الطلب الموجودة على موقع المحلة (منصة الباحثين) بعد التسجيل فيها مع إرفاق كافة المرفقات الواردة في خطوات وإجراءات التقديم أعلاه.
6. تقوم هيئة تحرير المحلة بالفحص الأولي للبحث، وتقرير أهليته للتحكيم، أو الاعتذار عن قبوله أولاً أو بناء على تقارير المحكمين دون إبداء الأسباب وإخطار الباحث بذلك
7. تملك المحلة حق رفض البحث الأولي ما دام غير مكتمل أو غير ملتزم بالضوابط الفنية ومعايير كتابة البحث في مجلة حائل للعلوم الإنسانية.
8. في حال تقرر أهلية البحث للتحكيم يحظر الباحث بذلك، وعليه دفع الرسوم المالية المقررة للمحلة (1000) ريال غير مستردة من خلال الإبداع على حساب المحلة ورفع الإيصال من خلال منصة التقديم المتاحة على موقع المحلة، وذلك خلال مدة خمس أيام عمل منذ إخطار الباحث بقبول بحثه أولاً وفي حالة عدم السداد خلال المدة المذكورة يعتبر القبول الأولي ملغى.
9. بعد دفع الرسوم المطلوبة من قبل الباحث خلال المدة المقررة للدفع ورفع سند الإيصال من خلال منصة التقديم، يرسل البحث لمحكمين اثنين؛ على الأقل.
10. فسي حال اكتمال تقارير المحكمين عن البحث؛ يتم إرسال خطاب للباحث يتضمن إحدى الحالات التالية:
  - أ. قبول البحث للنشر مباشرة.
  - ب. قبول البحث للنشر؛ بعد التعديل.
  - ج. تعديل البحث، ثم إعادة تحكيمه.
  - د. الاعتذار عن قبول البحث ونشره.
11. إذا تطلب الأمر من الباحث القيام ببعض التعديلات على بحثه، فإنه يجب أن يتم ذلك في غضون (أسبوعين) من تاريخ الخطاب) من الطلب. فإذا تأخر الباحث عن إجراء التعديلات خلال المدة المحددة، يعتبر ذلك عدولاً منه عن النشر، ما لم يقدم عذراً مقبولة هيئة تحرير المحلة.
12. في حالة رفض أحد المحكمين للبحث، وقبول المحكم الآخر له وكانت درجته أقل من 70%؛ فإنه يحق للمحلة الاعتذار عن قبول البحث ونشره دون الحاجة إلى تحويله إلى محكم مرجح، وتكون الرسوم غير مستردة.



13. يقدم الباحث الرئيس (حسب نموذج الرد على المحكمين) تقرير عن تعديل البحث وفقاً للملاحظات الواردة في تقارير المحكمين الإجمالية أو التفصيلية في من البحث
14. للمحلة الحق في الحذف أو التعديل في الصياغة اللغوية للدراسة بما يتفق مع قواعد النشر، كما يحق للمحررين إجراء بعض التعديلات من أجل التصحيح اللغوي والفني. وإلغاء التكرار، وإيضاح ما يلزم. وكنذك لها الحق في رفض البحث دون إبداء الأسباب.
15. في حالة رفض البحث من قبل المحكمين فإن الرسوم غير مستردة.
16. إذا رفض البحث، ورجب المؤلف في الحصول على ملاحظات المحكمين، فإنه يمكن تزويده بهم، مع الحفاظ على سرية المحكمين. ولا يحق للباحث التقدم من جديد بالبحث نفسه إلى المحلة ولو أحرقت عليه جميع التعديلات المطلوبة.
17. لا ترد البحوث المقدمة إلى أصحابها سواء نشرت أم لم تنشر، ويخطر المؤلف في حالة عدم الموافقة على النشر.
18. يحق للمحلة أن ترسل للباحث المقبول بحته نسخة معتمدة للطباعة للمراجعة والتدقيق، وعليه إنجاز هذه العملية خلال 36 ساعة.
19. هيئة تحرير المحلة الحق فسي تحديد أولويات نشر البحوث، وترتيبها فنياً.

## المشرف العام

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## Bridging the Gap Between Face-to-Face and Online Sessions: EFL Teachers' Perceptions Toward Blended Learning

سد الفجوة بين التعليم الحضوري والتعليم عن بعد: تصورات معلمين اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه التعليم المدمج

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### Abstract

There has been a rise of internet-based technologies in the academic sector. These technologies have opened up a whole new world of possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning procedures and results such as blended learning (BL). This study aims to investigate the perception of foreign language teachers of blended learning at an English Language Institute at a university in Saudi Arabia. The study used a qualitative research design with a focus on thematic analysis. Three participants were identified through purposive sampling and contacted face-to-face personally. Data was then collected using observation followed by non-structured open-ended interview questions involving the three selected participants. The findings show that EFL teachers are enthusiastic about incorporating online teaching within face-to-face education.

**Keyword:** Blended learning, EFL teachers, Face-to-Face learning, Online learning

### المستخلص

كان هناك تطور في التقنيات القائمة على الإنترنت في القطاع الأكاديمي. لقد فتحت هذه التقنيات عالماً جديداً تماماً من الإمكانيات لتعزيز إجراءات ونتائج التدريس والتعلم مثل التعلم المدمج. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على تصور معلمي اللغة الأجنبية للتعلم المدمج في معهد اللغة الإنجليزية في إحدى جامعات المملكة العربية السعودية. استخدمت الدراسة تصميم البحث النوعي مع التركيز على التحليل الموضوعي. تم تحديد ثلاثة مشاركين من خلال أخذ العينات الهادفة وتم الاتصال بهم وجهاً لوجه شخصياً. تم بعد ذلك جمع البيانات باستخدام جمع البيانات بالملاحظة متبعة بأسئلة المقابلة المفتوحة غير المنظمة والتي تشمل المشاركون الثلاثة المختارين. تظهر النتائج أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية متحمسون لدمج التدريس عبر الإنترنت في التعليم وجهاً لوجه. وأنه يوجد العديد من الطرق التي تسهل استخدام التعلم المدمج يجب أخذها بعين الاعتبار.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم المدمج، معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التعلم وجهاً لوجه، التعلم عبر الإنترنت.

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## Introduction

The explosive rise of internet-based technologies and their accelerated penetration into the academic sector has resulted in considerable changes in the educational sector, especially in higher education. These technologies have opened up a whole new world of possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning procedures and results (Dziuban et al., 2018). Blended learning (BL) is one of the primary developments in learning and teaching techniques resulting from internet-based technology deployment (Hrašinski, 2019). Hrašinski (2019) indicates that BL was created to address some of the issues with e-learning, such as the emphasis on students' self-regulation and independence, the rising cases of students' difficulties adjusting to online courses, managing time, and the lack of "real" experiences in areas such as laboratories

Due to the capacity of students who enroll to the preparatory year at universities in Saudi Arabia, one of the plans to accommodate all the students is to integrate face-to-face with online sessions. At the English language institute (ELI) at university of Jeddah, three English sessions are weekly delivered to students face-to-face and two sessions online each semester via Blackboard platform. The duration of the face-to-face sessions are three hours, and the online sessions last for 4 to 5 hours each.

## Significance of the Study

Despite the number of studies that tackled the implementation of blended learning in Saudi Arabia, EFL teachers' perceptions regarding bridging the gap between face-to-face and online sessions are relatively unexplored. In addition, many studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of online learning on English teaching, and more specifically on students. However, Alebaikan and Troudi (2010) indicates that few studies have tackled teachers' perceptions regarding blended learning. This study was necessary because few studies investigated this issue.

## Problem Statement

The perspectives of teachers, who are crucial stakeholders in the adoption of any teaching methodology, particularly blended learning, are critical success factors. Teachers' participation is

agement solution and its online content (Gulnaz et al., 2020). Teachers' motivation and views about information and communication technology (ICT) use may impact students' BL use. Teachers' and students' attitudes about technology have a part in defining the educational advantages of online educational tools and encounters. Glulanz et al. (2020) illustrates that course assessments are mainly based on teachers' attitudes, expectations, and fulfillment. As a result, it's crucial to consider how teachers feel about it. Additionally, when L2 teachers teach the same content face-to-face and teach other sessions online, such a transition might cause a gap especially for students with lower grade point averages. There is a noticeable silence among students during the online sessions and they are less motivated to engage in class activities. This study seeks to explore the teachers' perceptions regarding the reasons that might cause this problem and how to rectify the gap between online and face-to-face sessions.

## Research Question

The research will address the following questions:

What is the perception of EFL teachers toward the implementation of blended learning?

What is the perception of EFL teachers regarding the strategies they use to smooth the transition between face-to-face and online sessions?

This study aims to investigate the perception of foreign language teachers of blended learning at university of Jeddah. The objectives to be met in this study include exploring teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of blended learning and teaching in the ELI at the university of Jeddah. In addition, this study aims to investigate teachers' perception regarding the challenges of using the blended learning and teaching approaches. Moreover, this study explores teachers' perceptions regarding the strategies they use to smooth the transition between face-to-face and online sessions.

## Literature Review

### Blended Learning

Even though the phrase "blended learning" was just recently coined, the concept has been around for quite some time. Blended learning has been characterized in various ways by various

scholars; therefore, there is no consensus on what it is. Hrašinski (2019) compiled three different definitions of blended learning from the research and concluded that the concept was a combination of (a) distinct teaching techniques, (b) diverse modes or deployment medium, or (c) online and face-to-face education. Considering that it is not usual to find a system that does not employ various instructional techniques and delivery media, the third description, as stated above, comes closest to capturing the spirit of blended learning. Even though the third description is universally acknowledged, many academics use blended learning in their ways (Cronje, 2020). Face-to-face engagement is no longer restricted to the conventional physical classroom setting because of developments in technology and the provision of visual aids (Vallée et al., 2020). It may also be used in a cyber educational background and a synchronized classroom (Hrašinski, 2019). Traditional face-to-face classrooms, online face-to-face, and Blended face-to-face are the three situations for adopting face-to-face contact. Regarding the target context, this research looks at the third situation.

### Blended Learning in Saudi Arabia

In EFL teaching, BL is a powerful tool for compensating for the lack of experience in the English language (Akbarov et al., 2018). In Saudi Arabia higher education, BL aids in accommodating all the students at the preparatory year with the small number of classrooms compared to the large number of students.

As indicated by Mohammed (2018), the implementation of Blended Learning in universities is in its initial stages and there is still a need for more studies to explore strategies that would pave the way toward a successful implementation of BL in teaching English. In addition, in a study done by Sheerah (2018), to review the literature in Saudi Arabia regarding the use of BL to teach English concerning the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. The study discussed some of the potential challenges of adopting BL to support English language skills development in Saudi Arabia and in general. The study identified several problems faced by institutions such as: lack of Internet connectivity, technical issues, workload, and confusing instructions in Blackboard for some students and instructors.

influenced by their opinions about the BL man She concluded that the adaptation of blended learning in teaching English has the potential to facilitate learning and maximize students' opportunities to practice the English language freely. However, the researcher indicated that there are issues which need to be resolved such as ensuring that the library facilities can deliver this type of approach, online materials are suitably supportive of the students needed to access them, and the design of blended learning approaches take account of the preferred learning methods of students, and the workload required to be successful.

Alebaikan and Troudi (2010) investigate the nature of obstacles encountered at Saudi universities while implementing a blended learning approach for college level students. One main obstacle that they found is in the traditional university culture where students and instructors are used to the traditional way of teaching. Al-Jarf (2005) in a study conducted on freshman students argued that some students did not take online instruction seriously as it was not used by other instructors and students at the college.

Alghamdi & Alnajami, (2023) tackled very important point which is the fact that BL requires a high level of teachers' awareness. They recommend "technological literacy training, the establishment of standard guidelines for blended courses, continuous professional development for educators, fostering robust online communities, and diversifying assessment strategies" (p.24) as important points to be considered before adopting blended learning in universities.

That is aligned with Ali et al. (2023) study to explore the effects of blended learning on first-year Arab university students' oral production. They discussed that most college level students underestimate online learning and most of them do not take online sessions seriously. They concluded that first year freshmen students in Saudi Arabia need orientation regarding the significance of online learning and that fact that it is no less than face-to-face learning.

Anas (2020) examines learners' perceptions and satisfaction towards blended learning environments designed around the transactional and transformational approaches of learning theories in a blended course in the College of Arts & Sciences, Al-Namas, the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia.



The findings of this study confirm that design for the learning environment makes a significant impact on learners' interaction and engagement in BL courses. In addition, this study sheds the light on important points to be considered in blended learning. He indicates that multiple learning environments should be incorporated into BL courses to make learning more natural and realistic.

### Benefits of Blended Learning in EFL Contexts

Despite BL challenges, BL benefits both learners and educators, according to some research on BL in EFL contexts (Altay, 2019). It motivates students' engagement in the learning (Gulnaz et al., 2020), helps them improve their language abilities (Akbarov et al., 2018), enables them to study at their speed, encourages deeper learning (Singh et al., 2021), and makes technology more accessible to them (Vallée et al., 2020). Furthermore, BL aids learners' future preparedness by providing various skills that can immediately be applied to real-world situations, including self-learning, research skills, responsibility, and computer skills.

On the other hand, teachers benefit from BL because it improves the classroom conditions, gives them access to worldwide teaching materials and resources appropriate for their students' level, allows for increased cooperation and effective professional development, and helps them save time (Pardede, 2019).

As stated by Pardede (2019), the implementation of BL may enable instructors to react to a broad range of students' learning requirements, support the process of learning, and encourage reflective, active, and collaborative learning. Furthermore, teachers may have an enhanced comprehension of the learning abilities of individual students through online assessment in BL. According to Castro (2019), this allows the teachers to improve interactive and collaborative learning for each student beyond the face-to-face sessions. The benefits associated with BL have attracted educators to use it in English language instruction.

Whether face-to-face or online, acquisition of knowledge and obtaining a higher order of critical thinking are goals of higher education. In the face-to-face setting, this is evident through classroom discussions, laboratory exercises, and oral and written examinations.

Instructors have regular contact with students and are able to assess their prior learning and their level of cognitive knowledge in every class. They rely on a number of unobtrusive visual cues from their students to enhance their delivery.

A quick glance, for example, reveals who is attentively taking notes, pondering a difficult concept, or preparing to make a comment. The student who is frustrated, confused, tired, or bored is equally evident. The attentive instructor consciously and subconsciously receives and analyzes these visual cues and adjusts the course delivery to meet the needs of the class during a particular lesson.

In studies investigating the quality of BL, there has been much emphasis on the role of student perception. Vallée et al. (2020), for example, conducted an extensive meta-analysis study and found a link between improved grades and positive student perceptions regarding BL. The study concluded that teachers who used BL were required to understand students' perceptions of online learning and devise ways to support learning. Students' satisfaction with online classes has been studied extensively, and some experts believe it is crucial in assessing the effectiveness of Computer Assisted Language Learning (Gulnaz et al., 2020).

Kurt and Yıldırım (2018) discovered that learning conducted on web 2.0 portals had favorable outcomes on the level of motivation amongst Korean EFL learners. It thus offered great alternatives for self-directed learning. However, Owston et al. (2019) showed a significant difference in satisfaction between students who attended online and conventional in-class learning in an analysis of over 20 papers about distant learning.

Other studies have shown that online learning and face-to-face classes are equally satisfying (Logan et al. 2002; Summers et al. 2005; York 2008). These studies show that online environment is an equal for education because its flexibility. The inference here might be that tech-savvy students are more experienced with blended learning in recent years and are evenly content with face-to-face and online classes.

### Significance of Studying Foreign Language Teachers' Beliefs

Kagan (1992) illustrates, "teachers' beliefs are subconsciously held assumptions about stu



dents, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught” (p. 65). However, Farrell (2005) indicates that teachers’ beliefs are regarded by others as unconscious; therefore, teachers must develop an awareness of their actions, which can be accomplished through expressing and articulating them. Teachers’ beliefs usually refer to their mental life that impacts their teaching practices (Kuzborska, 2011). In this study, teachers are urged to express their perceptions regarding blended learning which will inform the study with a holistic overview of their deep understanding of this concept. Teachers’ perceptions of blended learning will impact their actual practice in the classroom which will be investigated more in the interviews. As Phipps and Borg (2011) found that teachers’ beliefs stand as a filter in which they interpret new information. Borg (2005), in an analytical study about teachers’ beliefs asserts that from 1980, many research papers started recognizing the significance of closely studying teachers’ beliefs as they became key areas when researching teaching. This establishment of studying teachers’ beliefs resulted in an improvement in understanding the process of teachers’ learning (Kennedy, 1997). In this study, the participants are teachers and understanding their beliefs about blended teaching will help to get in-depth answers for this study inquires.

## Methodology

### Study Design

The study used a qualitative research design with a focus on thematic analysis. Given this study design, the required data was gathered directly from participants, and no previous hypothesis was developed. The data obtained from the participants was based on their unique viewpoints and actual practice, from which an inductive process was used to derive themes and categories. The Qualitative thematic analysis research design is among the many research methods for analyzing text data. A study based on this research method should emphasize language’s content or contextual meaning. In this study, I used class observations and interviews to answer the research questions of this study.

### Research paradigm

A paradigm comprises the fundamental beliefs that guide actions and help make sense of society’s real issues. Ton et al. (2021) advise that

should adopt a paradigm that represents his/her relationship with the worldview and can ensure that the research is legitimate. This indicates that paradigms are critical in describing the researcher’s belief about how to carry out an inquiry. The naturalistic paradigm assumes the meaning is constructed by study participants and research observers, consequently there are multiple realities (Erlandson et al.1993).

The study used a naturalistic research paradigm that accepts the ontological assumption of reality. Confined to a constructivist worldview, the naturalistic paradigm adopted by the researcher has two founding tenets. The first is that the researcher should not manipulate the data collected to suit his/ her preferred view, and the second is that the research should be void of a priori outcome. Guba (1990) indicates that “to identify the variety of constructions that exist and bring them into as much consensus as possible” (p. 26). To the naturalistic researcher, adherence to the tenets contradicts the artificial situation common with positivist designs that ignore the humanness of research.

### Participants

Sampling allows researchers to obtain results from a population without investigating every individual instead of using a subset of the population. The participants were identified through purposive sampling and contacted via email and face-to-face. In the purposeful sampling, the research identified three “information-rich” teachers from a university based on different variables such as teaching experience years, ages, nationalities, and background in teaching English online. The purposeful sampling is when the researcher is insured to select participants based on their ability to contribute in answering the research questions (Creswell, 2013).

However, it was essential to confirm the participants’ consent to taking part in the study; the participants were all given participant informed consent to sign before they could participate. The participants consisted of three female teachers of the English Level 100 and 101 courses. They all had an experience of at least four years of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at the college education level.

## Data collection

Data was collected using observations and non-structured open-ended interview questions involving the three selected participants. First, a survey was sent via email to the English language teachers at the ELI to collect information regarding their teaching experience years, ages, nationalities, and background in learning English online. I conducted this study at one of the largest female universities in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. As a female researcher intended to conduct my study in Saudi Arabia, I could only work with female participants. The participants for this study were three female English lecturers who teach English in the preparatory year. I observed teachers for two sessions each, with each session lasting two hours. I observed each participant for two sessions, one was online through Blackboard platform, and one was face-to-face.

Observations provided details about the participants' teaching practices in the face-to-face and online sessions. After I collected and interpreted the data, I provided each of my participants with a report regarding my interpretation of the data collected. This was completed in order to reinforce the socially constructed, inferred meanings on beliefs and reports on each method. Then, I contacted the participants to interview them for about one hour. The nature of the interviews made it possible for the researcher to get more insights and indulge in an in-depth analysis of the participants' perceptions.

## Results and Discussions

The study used a thematic data analysis. The focus of thematic analysis is to identify the areas that produce meaning within the participants' texts. I examined the interviews to identify common themes that emerged repeatedly. Then, I analyzed the interviews through different steps. First, I familiarized myself with the transcripts by reading through the interviews and taking initial notes. Second, I coded the data using different colors. Each code described an idea that expresses in the interviews.

The last step, I identified patterns among themes and came up with three themes. The replies to why it would be necessary to consider blended learning were submitted to content analysis to understand more about the participants' perspectives on blended learning. The participants' perspectives on mixed learning are shown in Table 1.

According to Castleberry and Nolen (2018), themes refer to recurring meanings in texts that convey a particular understanding of the study topic. Besides, themes are only accessible upon describing specific aspects of the participants' lived experience. Braun et al. believe that even though one theme can convey an in-depth meaning for the researcher on a given phenomenon, another researcher can understand it differently for the same phenomenon. In this sense, the themes served as the basic tools for exploring and interpreting the collected data.

### Participants' Perspectives on Blended Learning

#### Observation

The participants were observed when teaching online for one session each. All the participants were teaching using the digital copy of the book (iTools). All the participants used the same methods of teaching face-to-face sessions. There was a heavy reliance on an explicit approach and Grammar-Translation method. The language structure was explored, and grammar was presented using an explicit approach. Grammar was presented on the book then drills were used to practice the learned grammar points.

There was no difference between the methods and approaches used during face-to-face and online classes. Two of the participants used the same teaching strategies during face-to-face and online classes. They used the same teaching content in face-to-face and online sessions. One of the participants adopted different approach in online sessions. She used different web-based teaching methods to engage students to participate and interact during the online session.

Moreover, she taught less grammar concepts during the online sessions and focused more on class activities instead of starting new lessons.

The following interviews provided more insights about the teachers' practices and percep-

tions regarding blended learning and their thoughts about the strategies that they adopt to smooth the transition between face-to-face and online sessions.

### Interviews

**Table 1**

*Participants' perspectives on blended learning*

Response Category	Number of Respondents
Keeping up with modern ways of learning	2
Motivating learners	2
Enables collaborative learning	3
Continuous learning	1
Appeals to various styles of learning	2
Reduces the constraints of time and space	3
Autonomous learning	3
Creates independence in students	2
Ingrained in life learning	1
Additional exposure to input	3

### Significance of Blended Learning

All the three participants agreed that English language instruction requires technological advancements, which might justify the attempts to use a blended learning method. Two of the participants linked blended learning to increased motivation in learners. They also stated that combining online with face-to-face instruction may enhance student motivation. This finding is not consistent with Alebaikan and Troudi (2010) as they found that students and teachers are not motivated to incorporate BL in teaching as they are used to the traditional way of teaching.

These participants' opinions of the relationship between blended learning and enhanced student motivation are consistent with the outcomes of research done by Kurt and Anas (2020), which found that blended learning scenarios improved student motivation. One of the participants said during the conversation:

*Extract 1: Because today's learners have become digital natives who can't envisage a world without the internet, smart phones, or computers, providing them with online learning options may encourage them. (P2)*

Two participants indicated that instructors should embrace blended learning since it resonated with learners willing to explore various learning styles. However, all the participants said that integrating blended learning, which is also advocated by Pardede (2019) and Castro (2019), can encourage collaborative learning. All three participants agreed that instructors should consider blended learning because it has the potential to alleviate the time and space restrictions that conventional face-to-face education has. Besides, one of the participants linked blended learning to continuous learning. Two participants noted that learners taking part in blended learning settings might become independent since their learning is not restricted to face-to-face teaching from all-knowing instructors.

*Extract 2: Learners are likely to develop autonomy in blended learning, considering that they are responsible for their learning and study at their preferred speed. (P1)*

As shown in Table 1, one of the participants considered blended learning worthwhile since online platforms such as Black Board had become ingrained in both teachers' and students' daily lives. As a result, blended learning was similar to authentic learning. The participant went on to say that by attempting the blended learning method, students had more opportunities to be subjected to information in the target language.

The last set of questions in the questionnaire sought to determine the obstacles participants believe may arise due to using a blended learn-

ing strategy. The problems posed by the participants are listed in Table 2 below.

### Challenges of Blended Learning

Table 2

*Problems identified by the participants*

Response category	Number of Respondents
Training needs for learners and teachers in using relevant tools	2
Additional workload for teachers	2
Effect of the educational background of learners	2
Not applicable to all learning styles	2
Unavailability of internet connection and personal computers	1

Table 2 reveals that two participants believe that instructors and students need technology tool training. Similarly, according to the study by Kurt and Yildirim (2018), the participating EFL teachers expressed a need for education in using web 2.0 technologies. During the interviews, a participant, who said that she was yet to get accustomed to teaching in a hybrid setting, made the following observation:

*Extract 3: I have always wanted to include technology tools into my classroom, but I have little idea how to do so. I am willing to utilize them if someone shows me. (P2)*

Another issue expressed by the participants regarding the potential problems from instructing using a blended style is the increased workload for instructors. The consensus among the three participants was that blended learning adds to their already busy schedule. One of them stated that,

*Extract 4: I would consider teaching in a blended structure; nonetheless, I feel it only increases my workload. The only thing that concerns me is that I have to spend time outside normal class hours to offer feedback to my students. (P3)*

Blended learning may introduce additional obstacles to addressing learners' educational backgrounds. Two of the participants said that students are used to receiving knowledge from their professors. Learning without the direct influence of their instructors may be difficult, if not dangerous, for most students. In the research conducted by Owston et al. (2019), it was shown that learners were reliant on instructors' authority and hence overvalued face-to-face education. One participant expressed concern that combining online classes and face-to-face instruction would not be appropriate for the learning styles of all learners. According to the participants, not all learners could access the internet, which may present issues if they wished to utilize blended learning technologies. This finding is not aligned with Pardede (2019) study who found that BL promote self-learning independency.

The next set of questions inquired about the problems faced with blended learning, and participants were also asked to assess the need to support blended learning in English language teaching. One participant believed that face-to-face learning was adequate to ensure learning. Still, the other two participants believed that just exposing students to face-to-face learning was insufficient and that it needed to be supplemented and expanded by online learning. The arguments given by one of the participants on the reason for advocating for online learning to be included in the teaching of the English language are presented in the Extract below.

We can infer that face-to-face learning was insufficient and that it needed to be supplemented and expanded by online learning.

*Extract 5: Blended learning is essential in English language learning because English language learning is a continuous process that cannot be conceived of as li-*

*imited to certain locations and timelines pre-determined by others. Furthermore, if personalized training is necessary in order to achieve superior learning results, blended learning may be used to address this need. (P3)*

**Strategies to bridge the gap between face-to-face and online sessions**

**Table 3**

*Strategies to bridge the gap between face-to-face and online sessions*

Response Category	Number of Respondents
Schedule weekly check-ins	2
Teaching activities and workbook exercises on online sessions	3
Teaching less grammar concepts on online classes	3
Planning more collaborative exercises on online sessions	2
Develop web-based teaching methods	1

Two of the participants agreed that one of the strategies to bridge the gap between face-to-face and online sessions is to schedule weekly check-ins for the students. One of the participants suggested that she followed this strategy after noticing students' lack of participation during online sessions compared to the face-to-face sessions. She believed that this strategy helped her to reveal some of the students' underlying reasons regarding their silence during online sessions. She added that

*Extract 6: for any students who I noticed struggling or avoiding online sessions, I delivered paper packets and had weekly conversations with them to know more about the reasons that hinder them from engaging in online class activities and to check to see how they were doing and to find out if I could help them with anything. These check-ins happened on a regular basis and had an immense influence on students.*

She believed that this strategy smoothed the weekly transition between face-to-face and online sessions. Additionally, all the participants agreed that teaching activities and workbook exercises are based on online sessions rather than new vocabulary and grammar content. They indicated that during online sessions with lack of

in-person interaction, dwindling student motivation, and technical difficulties. They added finding effective instructional strategies, or online teaching activities that are impactful in engaging students online is more motivating to students than teaching them new lessons. This finding is consistent with Mohammed (2018) study that BL Saudi in universities is in its initial stages and there is still a need for more studies to explore strategies that would pave the way toward a successful implementation of BL in teaching English

One of the participants confirmed that she doesn't have a sufficient knowledge of the optimal methods that facilitate online teaching, and she relies on her long experience in face-to-face teaching. She found it very useful to choose from the collection of humanistic approaches and communicative approaches beside other teaching strategies that can engage students more in virtual settings. She discussed that one of the beneficial ways to Develop web-based teaching methods is to frequently reflect on their teaching style by using a journal where they write down comments, note adjustments, and brainstorm how you can change certain methods or procedures if necessary.



This finding is consistent with Alghamdi & Alnajami, (2023) study as they indicate that teachers need technological literacy training and continuous professional development.

On the other hand, one of the participants found this strategy inapplicable with the large number of students in each section and with the units and tasks required to be covered each week. This finding is not aligned with Castro (2019) study which illustrates that BL allows teachers to improve interactive and collaborative learning for each student beyond the face-to-face sessions.

Teaching activities and workbook exercises on online sessions related to the face-to-face instructed units rather than teaching new units was one of the strategies that all the participants advocate in order to bridge the gap between face-to-face and online sessions. They indicated that with the lack of in-person interaction, dwindling student motivation, and technical difficulties it is sometimes challenging to start new grammar lessons. One of the participants asserted that

*Extract 6 “ In face-to-face sessions , I teach grammar communicatively and I can encourage all the students to engage in conversations using the new grammar concepts, however, I found it challenging to do the same during online sessions, I prefer to do the workbook exercise with students during the online sessions and monitor their performance using discussion boards and I found that it was more effective for the learning process”.*

This finding is aligned with the results of Sheerah (2020) study where they link students' and classroom face-to-face climate and learning effectiveness. On the other hand, effective blended learning teaching methods that instructors adopt is a crucial aspect to bridge the gap between face-to-face and online sessions. Garrison and Kanuka (2004, 96), there are shortage in blended learning designs that can be followed by instructors. They state that there is considerable complexity in its implementation with the challenge of virtually limitless design possibilities and applicability to so many contexts.

## Conclusion

The findings show that EFL teachers are enthusiastic about incorporating online teaching within face-to-face education. Despite being familiar with blended learning and the acceptance by the majority of participants of the need to use blended learning technologies to facilitate learning, the vast majority of participants are not fully engaged in blended learning. Moreover, there are some strategies to bridge the gap between face-to-face and online sessions must be considered in blended learning. The two significant strategies that smooth the transitions in blended learning are teaching activities and workbook exercises on online sessions and teaching more grammar concepts in face-to-face classes.

Self-directed learning and flexibility are the most often mentioned arguments for encouraging blended English language instruction. Several English language instructors have said that promoting student autonomy is an essential objective that should be achieved. Nonetheless, one of the issues that would emerge with blended learning is the aspect of learners having different educational backgrounds, which is classified as teacher reliant in any educational setting. Because making a radical shift takes a long time, and a lot of work, initiating activities to create a mixed learning environment is the initial step in that direction, mainly because most participants agree that adopting a blended teaching style is necessary.

## Pedagogical Implications

The participants' problems might be solved by teaching instructors how to use blended learning strategies. Educators may be well prepared to handle their time effectively if they are supplied with coaching that illuminates them to become more effective and suitable for blended learning. As a result, the workload on the teachers may not grow to the extent that they anticipate. They may also identify strategies that appeal to all learners with diverse learning styles and take steps to create a learner-centered atmosphere where students are ready to take charge of their learning.

Instructors' perspectives are vital in any endeavor aimed at improving student learning since anticipating achievement from the applied strategies or techniques seems absurd unless teachers believe in the effectiveness of the style, method, or approach.

One of the recommendations to ensure a successful BL educational experience is the instructors need for technological literacy training and continuous professional development.

In this research, EFL teachers favor teaching in a mixed style, indicating the chance of succeeding using the blended teaching method. There are different strategies that can be taken into consideration to smooth the transitions in blended learning such as schedule weekly check-ins, teaching activities and workbook exercises on online sessions rather than starting new lessons, teaching less grammar concepts on online classes, planning more collaborative exercises on online sessions, and develop web-based teaching methods. Moreover, the finding of this study asserted that teachers' training programs to enhance the awareness of the different BL teaching methods and strategies would be essential. In addition, instructors must be trained to use new technological methods and strategies other than ones used in face-to-face-sessions.

### Limitations

The study has a limited number of participants only three Saudi female instructors. This limitation means the data of this study is not generalizable. The study recommends the need to examine more participants. In addition, the findings of the study may also change if the participants are other than female ones or from any other country than Saudi Arabia. It would be better if the study included participants from diverse teaching settings and educational backgrounds.

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